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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8617
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1769
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5243
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000063

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: GAMBARI WITH UN COUNTRY TEAM; SHAN ETHNIC PARTY

REF: RANGOON 59

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Classified By: Poloff Sean O'Neill for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

Summary

¶1. (SBU) Embassy Rangoon received reports of Gambari's January 31 and February 3 sessions with the UN Country Team, and his February 2 meeting with the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD). (See septel for Gambari's end-of-visit read-out to the Charge.) Gambari told the UN Country Team February 3 he received "good signs" that some political prisoners may be released soon. He sees his long-sought meeting with the ethnic SNLD as an achievement. Gambari did not travel to Nay Pyi Taw February 3 as some had expected, but was scheduled to meet with Prime Minister Thein Sein in Rangoon. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) In addition to traveling to the Irrawaddy Delta February 2, Gambari met with the joint secretary of the pro-regime National Unity Party, and separately with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, and Planning and Economic Development. On February 3, Gambari met with the UN Country Team, and was scheduled to meet representatives of political parties, "pro-regime civil society groups" (no further information) and the Prime Minister in Rangoon.

UN Staff: Gambari "Defensive" During Inbrief

¶3. (C) ILO Country Liaison Steve Marshall (protect) described Gambari as "defensive" during his Jan 31 briefing with the UN Country Team (UNCT). Marshall told us that Gambari spent a lot of the meeting lamenting the lack of support he receives from the UN Headquarters "between visits" and complaining about what he views as the UNSC and Group of Friends' inability to agree or act on Burma. Gambari told UN country team members that the GOB was continuing to control his schedule and that he only was learning of his scheduled

on a day-to-day basis. He told the UNCT that he will put great emphasis on gaining the trust of the NLD, and commented that he thinks the Obama administration offers the regime a good chance to repair relations with the U.S.

¶4. (C) Marshall told us he suggested Gambari speak with Special Rapporteur Ojea-Quintana so the two could coordinate their missions and messages. Marshall also suggested Gambari could benefit from the creation of an information-flow mechanism on Burma within the UN and by keeping the UNCT in Burma informed about his visits and plans. Marshall and others pointed out some of the obstacles to progress in Burma, including the ongoing arrests and convictions of many political activists. Marshall said Gambari agreed but did not discuss whether or how he would address those issues.

¶5. (C) Marshall privately complained to Poloff about the UN Resident Coordinator's failure to keep the Country Team informed about Gambari's visits and schedule, saying the coordinator did not formally inform the country team of the Saturday afternoon briefing with Gambari until 6pm on Friday night. When asked, Marshall described the failure to communicate as "typical."

UN Outbrief: "Good Signs" of Political Prisoner Release

¶6. (C) ILO Deputy Liaison Officer Piyamal Pichaiwongswe (protect) confirmed that Gambari held a 30 minute outbrief for the UNCT the afternoon of February 3. According to Pichaiwongswe, Gambari confirmed he met with Aung San Suu Kyi and the Uncles as well as leaders of the SNLD. Gambari told the UNCT that the NLD CEC members made clear that they reject

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the regime's "roadmap." They refused to discuss the 2010 elections with him. He noted that this was the first time he was permitted to meet with the SNLD and said he considers the regime's decision to grant his request to do so an achievement. He confirmed to the UNCT that he had met with several government officials including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Health, Agriculture, and Planning and Economic Development. He also confirmed that he was scheduled to meet with Prime Minister Thein Sein before departing for New Delhi the evening of February 3.

¶7. (C) Gambari told the UNCT that he had seen "good signs" some political prisoners may be released soon, possibly even before his return to New York on February 18. But Pichaiwongswe said Gambari would not elaborate on this when repeatedly pressed by some members of the UNCT, saying that he could not disclose the specifics. Gambari went on to tell the UNCT that he was intending to urge the GOB to extend the Tripartite Core Group's mandate when he met with the PM later in the afternoon.

Meeting with Shan Nationalities League for Democracy

¶8. (C) Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) secretariat member Sai Saw Aung told us February 3 that he and two of his colleagues, Sai Tin Hlaing and Sai Shwe Kyu, met with Gambari at the Sein Lei Kan Tha state guest house immediately after the UN envoy's meeting with the NLD on February 2 (reftel). When asked, Gambari told the SNLD the meeting was at his request.

¶9. (C) The SNLD members told Gambari they view themselves as representatives not only of their party, but also of the United Nationalities Alliance (UNA), which consists of 13 ethnic parties who won seats in the 1990 elections. They explained the SNLD's two primary goals: the release of all political prisoners and the start of a genuine tripartite dialogue. They presented an open letter from the UNA to Gambari dated January 31 urging Gambari to support those goals. The SNLD members told Gambari that the SNLD would not

participate in the 2010 elections unless the regime agrees to these two demands. Gambari told the SNLD he would relay the message to the regime as well as to "responsible persons" in the UN.

¶10. (C) Sai Saw Aung told us that the SNLD was only informed on the February 2 meeting by regime officials on the evening of February 1. As a result, he said the only other UNA member the party had time to consult was Mon National Democratic Front Vice Chairman Naing Ngwe Thein. According to Sai Saw Aung, Naing Ngwe Thein agreed with the SNLD's plan to pass Gambari the UNA letter.

¶11. (SBU) The Shan Nationalities League for Democracy participated in the 1990 elections and garnered the second largest number of votes behind the NLD. Like the NLD, they remain a legally-registered party and are officially included in the 13-member UNA.
DINGER